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RWANDA: Security in the Camps

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BACKGROUND

The problem of security in the Zaire camps offers no easy solution. The UN approached several countries and found little interest in providing foreign forces to assure security in the camps. The UNHCR and UN Secretary General have concluded that the proposal to use Zairian forces in the camps is the best available alternative, and the Security Council has now endorsed the idea. UNHCR will give support to the deployment of 1,500 security agents for the purpose of:

- improving law and order in the Rwandan refugee camps
- avoiding intimidation and violence against refugees wishing to repatriate
- protecting humanitarian installations and personnel
- providing escorts to convoys for voluntary repatriation from refugee camps to the border

The troops would be overseen by a group of 50-60 security experts seconded to UNHCR. UNHCR has estimated that it will cost \$9.6 million for the first five months of the operation. PRM is planning to contribute its fair share (no more than 25%) toward the effort.

It should be noted that Zairian forces have been handling security in the area around the camps for several months. While insecurity and intimidation remain a problem, there has been some improvement in security conditions, which some attribute to Zairian efforts in December to crack down on lawlessness and expel some troublemakers to Rwanda.

The UNHCR and the Dutch government have already helped fund additional police for the Tanzanian camps. The Tanzanians seem eager to take control of the camps, arrest the war criminals, escort refugees to the Rwandan border, and move any remaining refugees further inland. While they would probably need more international aid to accomplish their ambitious plans to clean out the camps, planning for such a mission is well along.

ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION

Security in the Camps

Belgian Views

- Belgium considers the question of camp security to be one for nation-states and consequently was one of the main opponents of the idea of a contract guard force. At the last meeting, ROSG members expressed disappointment that the SYG had simply passed the camp security issue to UNHCR, but the participants agreed to be supportive of UNHCR's efforts.

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U.S. Views/Objectives

- At this point, UNHCR's option is the only alternative for the Zaire camps. We plan to support the UNHCR proposal to have Zaire deploy its own forces to enhance camp security and escort returning refugees to the border (with the requisite UNHCR oversight). Our support will be through voluntary contributions to UNHCR, not bilateral aid to Zaire.
- We should verify Belgian support for the UNHCR proposal, sound them out on how they might assist UNHCR, and determine whether they believe any additional security initiative or more ambitious option is viable at this point.
- While the Tanzanian Government's willingness to provide the necessary security in the camps is encouraging, we are concerned that precipitous action could spark violence. The Tanzanians probably cannot proceed with their plan without international assistance. Such an action cannot be ruled out, however, and we should encourage the GOT to carefully consider the risks of such an operation with inadequate resources.
- We should obtain Belgium's views on the GOT's plans and their ideas on security in the Tanzanian camps.

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